



**STRATEGY  
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**ARMS CONTROL IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**BY**

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

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As the negotiated settlements of the Middle East Peace Process are implemented, we expect opportunities for concrete and visible arms control to emerge. Concern about the introduction of weapons of mass destruction is not a new consideration in the Middle East. Throughout the last generation, the politics of non-conventional warfare and nuclear deterrence have been the critical subtext of the more conventional subjects in the public discourse of Middle East affairs. This paper will address the complex problem of arms control and the trend to control armament in the Middle East including President Bush's initiative in May 1991 and the ACRS meetings. It contends that the end of the Cold War brought to the forefront additional economic pressures on the major arms suppliers, and the end of the Gulf War that directed the world towards a comprehensive arms control policy to stop the dangers posed by unrestrained militarization. Finally, my recommendations highlight what might be done in this regard.



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## ARMS CONTROL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Cold War-era arms control regimes have laid the foundation for today's ambitious and comprehensive international arms control agenda . United States leadership is essential to the future progress and success of international arms control regimes while there are daunting challenges to monitoring compliance with ever more intrusive and complex arms control provisions." The outlook for Middle East arms control may not be as optimistic as hoped. Yet judging by past experience as well as present conditions, the opportunities for progress are there"<sup>1</sup>

Since the 1991 Gulf War, a critical military challenge for military and political leaders throughout the Middle East has been to integrate non conventional and ballistic missile capabilities into coherent, workable, and affordable strategic doctrine. The war, the discoveries made in its aftermath, and the determination of countries in the region to acquire unconventional capabilities attest to the insufficiency of the inspection and monitoring programs sponsored by the international community, including the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). None has proven capable of preempting the transfer of missile technologies and the development of unconventional deterrent or war-fighting capabilities

Arms control is one of the important issues in the Middle East It has become more important since Madrid Peace Conference in Oct 1991 Arms control is essential for regional security, and the latter is a broader concept, encompassing military, economics and political consideration. Success and progress in arms control negotiations in the Middle East will help shape the legitimacy of security measures needed to achieve lasting peace.

The Arab Israeli conflict which over the last five decades has had a dominant influence on the structure of the region's arms control and security, has shattered the economies of the Middle East. Therefore, instability has stood in the way of genuine economic developments. But, eventually, the region concluded a number of long awaited peace treaties between some Arabs states and Israel. So, for the first time the interaction between Arabs and Israelis has the potential to be dominated by cooperation rather than conflict.

In light of the Gulf War and the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 and long standing historical rivalries in the Middle East there is widespread concern about the past and future importation of sophisticated conventional and unconventional weapons into this already heavily armed region in the world. Middle Eastern countries used to align themselves with one of the superpowers to enhance their security. The transfers of arms as well as arms control measures were used to achieve these objectives. The industrialized world has taken advantage of the

increased demand for weapons to reap economic benefits through arms sales programs. The purpose of this paper is to give an idea about this sensitive issue in the Middle East. However, I will elaborate on how to end arms competition, evaluate the existing efforts and initiatives to control armament in this region. Finally, I will recommend the future arrangements for arms control and arms transfers to the Middle East region.

## **ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES**

Arms control is something new to the hearts and minds of the people in the Middle East. At the same time the difference between arms control, arms limitation, arms reductions, arms embargoes, and Disarmament could be confusing. Arms control ideally means promoting the national security of all regional countries without discrimination, by limiting or reducing the threat posed by adversaries or neighboring countries to insure peace. Arms control is aimed at ensuring security and legitimate defense at lower and less dangerous levels.<sup>2</sup>

The Middle East arms control process begun at the Madrid Conference in 1991 aims at helping to make and ensure a lasting, comprehensive, and just peace.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, regional arms control would meet the interests of the countries involved, and reduce the pace of the arms race by redirecting arms funds to social and economic development.

Despite the complexity of Middle Eastern issues, especially in the security field, the goals of arms control must be ambitious. These goals could be summarized as follows<sup>4</sup>:

- Military stability, in order to prevent any specialized capabilities that enhance the ability of one country to create dramatic change in the balance of regional military power.
- Military transparency and predictability, which are necessary to help military leaders avoid the "worst case analysis", which creates additional pressure for an arms build up, not arms control.
- Crisis stability, which is still important. If the region achieves peace, the potential for differences and contradictions leading to problems and disputes will always remain. Therefore, there should be some sort of regional procedures in order to avoid crises as well as to notify the concerned regional parties to prevent a crisis.
- Prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems. Of course it is also a global responsibility. The majority of Middle East countries can not accept an Israeli or any other monopoly.
- Reduction in the consequences of war if one occurs, which is the logical result of any reduction of the capabilities of conflicting forces.
- Improvement in political relations. Generally speaking, any progress in arms control

efforts signals relative improvement in political relations.

■ At a minimum, arms control measures could delay or possibly prevent a new round of weapons competition and military activities, which may serve as a catalyst to inadvertent or accidental war.<sup>5</sup>

Arms control is not an end by itself. It is a means to achieve security, stability and peace. It is regarded by many decision makers and intellectuals as a sure way to achieve this purpose through several methods. These methods include reducing the possibility of war, constraining war effects and limiting its results in case of break out, achieving balance of power among countries, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and enhancing procedures of trust building and establishing good relationships among countries.

### **REASONS FOR MIDDLE EAST NATIONS TO ACQUIRE ARMS**

For different reasons the Middle East countries have pursued a noticeable armament race for both conventional and unconventional weapons.<sup>6</sup> Reasons include competition between the two superpowers leading to competition between their respective regional client states, and the desire of the regional countries to pursue their national security interests by expanding and modernizing their military forces rather than by reaching political compromises. Such proliferation has two forms: the first implies the development, production, procurement, transportation, and accumulation of armament. The other implies the regular build up of armed forces.

However, the experience of more than four decades of conflict, instability, and wars has led the regional states to focus on procuring military equipment, and opening the door to a regional arms race.<sup>7</sup> During the beginning of the last decade, five of the world's ten largest recipients of advanced weapon systems have been in the Middle East.<sup>8</sup>

Border disputes among states in the region and claims for historical rights between Israelis and Palestinians represent the main causes of military confrontations which lead to high armament rates in the region. Added to these are ideological differences, minorities, and natural resources which represent major sources of dispute.<sup>9</sup> The major confrontation in recent history, in addition to the Arab-Israeli conflict, was the war between Iraq and Iran.<sup>10</sup> In spite of the different causes for each of these disputes, analysis reveals that a resort to armed confrontation tends to occur when political leaders have a narrow perspective. In these cases the use of diplomatic means in order to avoid armed conflict has occurred far too infrequently.<sup>11</sup>

Israel is a prime example where this issue becomes problematic due to its alleged unique development and "security" problems. There is the need for armament in order to protect the

Israeli borders. Secondly, the issue of security acquired a mysterious and loose negative aura around the Israeli state and hence extended to the region.<sup>12</sup> Numerous factors help explain this unique Israeli position. Among them are the long series of wars and continuous state of conflict in addition to internal problems.<sup>13</sup>

Arms control in the Middle East is considered a very tough mission, since the security environment for Middle East states is different from each other in so many areas. The different states adopted varying defensive doctrines, and weapon systems are so different, it is impossible to compare capabilities. Moreover, the Arab-Israeli armament race is linked to other states in the region adopting armament race, particularly, in the Gulf. And so, this makes any arms control arrangement in the Middle East so complex especially if Iran doesn't agree to enter in a regional arms control agreement Furthermore, and "In the field of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the Middle East and North Africa have the highest concentration of these types of weapons and missiles programs of any region in the world. They have been acquired through direct purchase, domestic development, or a combination of the two. This trend is dangerous because as states become self sufficient, they become less susceptible to outside pressure".<sup>14</sup>

The quest to achieve a balance of power, the lack of trust between Arabs and Israelis, and the perception that the United States in its regional role is not even handed in its treatment of local actors are all factors contributing to the vertical and horizontal proliferation trends that are making the region highly dangerous and volatile.<sup>15</sup>

United States has concluded that Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria are aggressively seeking NBC weapons and increased missile capabilities. From the Arab side, Arabs believe that the Israeli nuclear arsenal poses a threat to their security, so they have to acquire a strategic balance. Therefore, they have sought WMD capabilities in the form of the "poor man's weapons", such as chemical and biological capabilities.<sup>16</sup>

## **SOURCES OF MIDDLE EAST ARMAMENT AND PROLIFERATION**

The largest suppliers of conventional arms to the Middle East and elsewhere are the United States, Russia, Britain, China, and France. In 1991 the United States arms exports exceeded forty-eight percent of the total world conventional weapons sales and more than sixty percent of the Third World arms imports. In 1994 the U.S. arms sales were about 24 billion dollars.<sup>17</sup> The Middle East and East Asia were responsible for almost half of the world's arms trade in 1993. Of these, the two largest suppliers, were the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. However, the United States has significantly increased its arms exports to

the region after 1987, a fact reflected by the more than \$14.5 billion in U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia in 1990 for example <sup>18</sup>

In fact the U.S. and western countries have never stopped exporting weapons to the region in spite of claims by these states regarding the necessity of arms control arrangements. These countries may be under pressure of military industries because of the crucial role arms sales play in the economy. On the other hand, the former Eastern Block states and China use arms markets and military equipment sales to Middle East countries to generate hard currency income, leading to the proliferation of hi-tech weapons in the region, particularly after the Gulf War.

There are twenty four or more other countries considered suppliers of arms in the world. Nearly every industrialized country including third world countries is actively competing for foreign armament sales. Several, such as Brazil and China have very permissive export policies and have indicated they will not join any arms export restrictions.

The United States Secretary of Defense analysis in 1993 showed that thirty seven countries only were responsible for importing eighty six percent of the world's arms exports. Ninety two percent of the U.S. arms sales were delivered to these countries (including U.S. military aid). <sup>19</sup> The total countries importing U.S. arms now are more than one hundred forty countries. The Middle East is considered the largest arms market in the world. <sup>20</sup> Saudi Arabia will continue to be the largest U.S. arms importer. It imports more than fifty percent of the total Middle East arm sales including U.S.- made M1A2 tanks, F-15 and F-16 fighters, the Bradley fighting vehicles, helicopters, and electronic warfare equipment. <sup>21</sup> The Middle East's arms imports were about 60 billion dollars between 1994-2000.

## **ARMS RACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Most of the conflicts in the Middle East, especially between the Arabs and the Israelis, were the result of trying to solve differences by armed power, which was worthless. Consequently, the arms race has grown in this region. According to estimates for the U.S. Agency for Arms Control / Disarmament, the Middle East, which has 3% of the world population, has imported more than 30% of the world military products and services during the decade of eighties <sup>22</sup> This region has allocated more than 1/10th of its income for military expenditures which is twice as much as any region in the world. <sup>23</sup>

At the start of the 1990s this pattern of proportionally large arms transfers to the region did not seem to be changing. In fact, the general relaxation of tensions between the US and Soviet Union led to a new trend. The Middle East appeared destined to absorb much of the surplus

military equipment that was made available by conventional arms control agreements between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. With adequate supplies of hard currency, some countries in the Middle East were ready as ever to make up for the markets lost in Europe by the scaling back of the Cold War and the reduced defense expenditures of the industrial world.

### Conventional Arms

For these reasons the conventional arms race in the Middle East was growing worse. Russia and the Confederation of Independent states had more conventional weapons than what they needed. Their collapsing economies and struggle for hard currency made them compulsive weapons sellers despite of U.S. opposition.<sup>24</sup> China continued its armament sales to the Middle East countries adopting a very permissive export policy.

The United States supporting its allies in the region, accounted for fifty percent of all arms sales to the Middle East between 1988-1991 which was about seventy five percent of U.S. weapon sales to the third world in that period.<sup>25</sup> These sales included \$650 million Apache and Black Hawk helicopters and Harpoon missiles to Israel and 72 F15E jet fighters to Saudi Arabia.<sup>26</sup> This was in contrast to the U.S. attitude after the Gulf War to decreasing weapon sales to the Middle East.

Iran, while searching for a dominant role in the region, tried to make use of Iraq's weakness as a result of the sanctions following the Gulf War. To play this role, Iran tried to build up a heavy armament of conventional and unconventional weapons to include purchasing three Russian submarines which may disturb the western patrols in the area.

### UNCONVENTIONAL ARMS

Middle East security situations have always been prominent in the international order. The Middle East was always considered, along with Europe, major theatre for possible confrontation between the two superpowers. And that was clear in different situations such as 1956 and 1973 wars. Accordingly, in the last five decades, the policy of arms sales adopted by the super powers have been an important tool in interfering directly or indirectly in the regional conflicts, and formulating alliances to serve its interests at regional and international levels. The results of these policies have led in the eighties to the existence of unprecedented spread of weapons of mass destruction and surface- to- surface long range missiles spread in the Middle East.

Currently, only Israel is a nuclear power in the Middle East. Its approximate arsenal of nuclear weapons is about 200-300.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, it possesses chemical and biological capabilities. Some Arab countries acquired, in turn, "SCUD" missiles equipped with conventional warheads from USSR, China and North Korea. All the while, some countries in this region were

able to get the capability of designing and producing long-range ballistic missiles and succeeded in developing their chemical and biological programs as a deterrent weapon in the face of the Israeli nuclear arsenal.

On the other hand, the media is talking about the Iranian trend to possess nuclear weapons. The claims that Iran paid for nuclear warheads from Kazakhstan to be used in conjunction with the Chinese Silkworm missiles is extremely serious.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, China is building a nuclear reactor in Iran which may indicate an Iranian program to produce nuclear weapons.<sup>29</sup>

The Middle Eastern countries are now very much interested in building a large arsenal of ballistic missiles. The proliferation of these missiles is becoming a big challenge in Middle East arms control. Most of the important armies in the region have adopted building- up programs by purchasing missiles from many sources, or else developing a national industry to produce them. Some of these ballistics missiles are of high quality. The use of the Iraqi missiles against Saudi Arabia and Israel in the Gulf War in 1991 increased the need to acquire advanced ballistic missiles in the region.<sup>30</sup>

Several countries in the Middle East now have the capability to launch ballistic missiles: Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia Libya and Yemen Kuwait used to have FROG-7 missiles too, but they were destroyed by the Iraqis in 1990. Some of these countries have used their missile capabilities in different wars. Syria and Egypt used them against Israel in 1973; Iran and Iraq launched more than 1000 missiles against each other during the Iraq-Iran war. Some have developed their native programs like Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Syria and Libya.<sup>31</sup>

This table clarifies the Middle East states capabilities of surface- to- surface Missiles.<sup>32</sup>

COUNTRY	SYSTEM	RANGE(km)	PAYLOAD(kg)
Egypt	Frog-7	70	450
	Frog-5	50	250
	Scud B	280	1,000
	Scud 100	N/A	N/A
	Sakar80	80	200
Iran	Scud B	280	1,000
	Oghab	40	300
	Nazeat	130	N/A
	Shahin-2	110-130	N/A
Israel	Jericho 2B	1500	750
	Jericho 2	750	450/680
	Jericho 1	480	250

	Shavit	N/A	N/A
	Lance	120	200
Saudi Arabia	DF-3(CSS-2)	2,200	2,000
Syria	Scud B	280	1,000
	Frog-7	70	450
	SS-21	120	250
Libya	Frog-7	70	450
	Scud B	280	1,000
	Otrag	500	N/A
	Al-Fatih	480-720	N/A
Yemen	Scud B	280	1,000
	Frog-7	70	450
	SS-21	120	250

TABLE 1

Surface- to- surface missiles are dangerous weapons. They are capable of carrying nuclear, chemical or biological munitions. Although these missiles are considered conventional weapons, we should keep in mind their capability to deliver WMD. This was the major issue which led President Bush to propose a freeze on acquisition, production, and testing of surface-to- surface missiles by the Middle Eastern states. There was a concerted effort from the suppliers to coordinate export licensing for equipment and technology that could be used to manufacture such missiles.

#### THE IMPACT OF THE PEACE PROCESS ON ARMS CONTROL

The only way to ensure arms control in the Middle East is to ensure compliance with peace treaties between the disputing parties rather than arms control treaties. It is not difficult for any nation in this region to acquire arms from any exporter if it's national security is threatened. Therefore, being convinced by a lasting, just peace in the region is vital to adopt the peace approach. This would be reflected in down-sized armies and a firm commitment to the arms control formula.<sup>33</sup>

For the past 52 years Middle Eastern conflicts inhibited the establishment of normal relations between Israel and other governments in the region. There have been few opportunities for arms control agreements, or even for arms control discussions, within this region. As the negotiated settlements of the Middle East Peace Process are implemented, governments will establish relations and expand commercial and social contacts. In this more

stable security environment, it is expected that opportunities for concrete and visible arms control to emerge.

The emerging realities might serve to resurrect the spirit of restraint sometime in the future: the impact of the now-consummated Israeli - Palestinian accord and the ongoing economic troubles of some of the Gulf states, most prominently Saudi Arabia. It is also plausible that if the Israeli - Palestinian peace negotiations were to succeed, then the overall level of tension in the Middle East might be reduced and the area might be more susceptible to the kind of restraint embodied in the Middle East Arms Control Initiative (MEACI). This assumes, however, that the constant flow of arms is not required, as in the past, to fine-tune local balances of power. It also assumes that over tensions, such as the continuing resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism, will not create their own set of demands for arms transfers into the region.

The prospect of peace between Israel and frontline Arab states allows for the possibility of either viable supplier restraint arms control proposals or regional accords based on agreed qualitative and quantitative limits, or a combination of the two activities. If the peace is sufficiently persuasive to allow Israel to reduce its state of arms, then the Arab states, on the basis of economic rationales alone, will likely follow. Supplier proposals, based on the spirit if not the letter of the MEACI, could then be used to retard such practices as preemptive selling or the insertion of escalatory or unbalancing weaponry into the area.

These peace developments in the region are promising. Initial signals are encouraging with regard to the Arab- Israeli peace process in spite of the tie- up of the Israeli-Syrian dialogue on a comprehensive settlements. But, despite these encouraging signs, the unresolved inter-linked proliferation and security issues of the region continue to pose serious nonproliferation challenges.

These new international and regional developments pushed the Middle East into two contrasting directions. The first is represented by a build-up of huge military capabilities from the side of the main parties in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the opposing direction, efforts were exerted to settle the Arabs-Israeli Conflict. This settlement will never be completed unless the lethal armament race in the region has been taken into consideration. This focused attention to the concept of arms control as one of the five important issues in multilateral negotiations of the peace process that deal with arms control, water, refugees, economic development and environment. Just recognizing the arms race as one of the major factors of instability in the Middle East is a very important step.

However, international policies will have direct impact on the Middle East region regardless of the outcomes of the multilateral negotiations. Since Israel can overcome these impacts either through its nuclear option or through its alliance with the U.S., the Arab side is likely to be the loser in this regard. This outcome corresponds with the United States perspective regarding the strategic balance in the region.

The peace process in the Middle East, and the peace treaties between Israel and some of its neighbors, offered the prospect for the first time of transforming the security environment of the Middle East. If the peace process broadens to include a Syrian-Israeli accord and deepens with a final status agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, the Levant States are likely to move towards smaller militaries with older weapons. However, even under the best circumstances, changes will come slowly.<sup>34</sup>

### **ARMS CONTROL TRENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Endeavors for arms control and disarmament in the Middle East region since the outset of the Arab-Israeli conflict were varied starting with Security Council Resolution 50 for the termination of fighting in Palestine in May 1948. This resolution included embargoes on all arms and military equipment to all sides of the conflict. Followed by the truce agreement in 1949 between Israel, Egypt and Syria, and then the London declaration in 1950 which included the UK, France and U.S commitment to put restrictions on the flow of weapons to the region.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to that there are many groups established particularly to put rules and restrictions on exporting and importing arms and technology not only to the Middle East region, but also of a global nature such as Control System in Missiles Technology (MTCR).

Middle East Arms Control Initiative, 29 May 1991 (MEACI).

Fulfilling the pledge he made on March 6, 1991 address to a joint session of Congress, where he declared that there are three main challenges confronting the Middle East:<sup>36</sup> establishing joint security arrangements in the region with assistance of the United States; control over mass destruction weapons and its related means; put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict in a frame of comprehensive peaceful process based on Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and the principle of land for peace. Former president George Bush announced on May 29, 1991 his initiative aimed at brake the spread of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in addition to the missiles that can deliver this kind of weapons. The proposals also seek to restrain destabilizing conventional arms build-ups to include the entire region and reflect U.S. consultations with its allies, governments in the region and key suppliers of arms and technology. The initiative included the following principles:<sup>37</sup>

■ Proliferation issue is an international problem, and it should be addressed internationally.

■ Non proliferation must apply equally on all nations of the Middle East, so that no country could cause another crises or war.<sup>38</sup>

■ The support of both weapon exporters and importers is essential" to prevent dangerous regional imbalances and to promote stability".<sup>39</sup>

The initiative stated that the acquisitions and production of surface- to- surface missiles should be frozen as a preliminary step towards the full removal of these missiles. Also to monitor export of technologies that help in manufacturing or developing these missiles.<sup>40</sup>

The initiative called on nations, who are not parties of the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapon Treaty, to sign on it. The region should be subject to the guarantees of the International Agency for Nuclear Energy. It also called to support the efforts to make the Middle East a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone<sup>41</sup>

The initiative called all nations to sign the Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC), calling the states in the region for a pre signature implementation of a suitable chemical weapons convention provision with commitment to the (CWC) as original parties.<sup>42</sup>

President Bush's proposals called for supporting the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) of 1972, through the full implementation of its context, calling all countries in the Middle East to start confidence building measures in this respect.<sup>43</sup>

Bush's initiative also called the major arms suppliers to meet at a high level of government to put the guidelines for restrictions on all the transfers of conventional arms, weapons of mass distractions and armament technology to the Middle East.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, the initiative insured that these efforts should take into consideration the legitimate defensive requirements for the regional state, and their ability to deter aggression , and which is an important stabilizing factor.<sup>45</sup> This proposal aimed to support Israel and Saudi Arabia in particular and it created a lot of suspicions in the other Middle East states.

#### PARIS MEETING, 8-9 JULY 1991

Two months after President Bush's initiative, a meeting was held in Paris to discuss implementing his proposal and representatives of U.S., UK, China, Soviet Union and France attended this meeting. These major exporting countries accepted the principle of undertaking effective measures of non-proliferation and arms control to the Middle East region. They accepted with a full commitment to halt transference of conventional arms and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction which may affect the stability in this particular region.<sup>46</sup>

## LONDON MEETING, 17-18 OCTOBER 1991

Paris meeting was followed by a London meeting with representatives from the same countries. It had been proposed that this meeting would be more substantial and should result in the identification and categorization of weaponry and behavior that might contribute to instability in the Middle East. In essence, the London meeting was designed to establish the definitional parameters within which the arms suppliers would act in the future. . Again, they agreed on the Parisian meeting guidelines of arms export to the Middle East region with limited progress. At the second London meeting in February 1992 the group had been able to reach a consensus on broad definitions.

## THE ARMS CONTROL AND REGIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE (ACRSC)

The end of the Cold War, combined with the sweeping victory in the Gulf War states led by the U.S., created an ideal atmosphere to introduce a new initiative in the Middle East. The accouchement of the ACRSC was the logical emanation of these international proceedings. The absence of the Soviet Union as a major super power supporting the Middle Eastern disapprobation states was a vital element in this regard.

ACRSC was composed of 14 Middle Eastern states and parties as follows:

- The "core" states and parties who were involved in the bilateral peace negotiations-- Israel, Egypt , Jordan, later on the Palestinians, and (Syria and Lebanon) who district ACRS and the other multilateral negotiations.

- The states of the Gulf cooperation Council including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and UAE.

- The Arab Maghrib states including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and later on Mauritania.

ACRSC meetings and activities were divided into four stages<sup>47</sup>:

- The first stage was considered as the founding stage, including the first meeting in January 1992 in Moscow which was an organizational meeting. The second meeting in September 1993 was in Moscow too.

- The second stage concentrated on defining ACRSC work agenda, including the third meeting in Washington DC in May 1993, by setting the "intersessional" activities. The fourth meeting in Moscow was in November 1993.

- The third stage was a negotiating stage, discussing the initial agreements based on multilateral security cooperation including the fourth meeting in Moscow in November 1993. The fifth meeting was in Doha/Qatar in May 1994. The sixth meeting was in Tunis in December 1994.

■ The fourth stage was the breakdown stage of the ACRS process. It occurred between 1993-1996. Many reasons contributed this end, but the most particular was the Egyptian insistence on making a connection between any further progress and the Israeli commitment towards the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and other issues relating to nuclear arms control.

The early discussions of the Arms Control and Regional Security Committee (ACRSC) reflected sharp differences of the concerned parties. These differences were a result of the governing principles and intentions of each party. The absence of some regional states such as Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Libya, from the multilateral negotiations is considered a primary reason for not commencing serious negotiations regarding arms control. However, the following are the perspectives of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Israel as major concerned parties in the core states in the ACRS.

### **The Egyptian Position**

From the Egyptian perspective<sup>48</sup> :

■ Negotiations should include the highly developed conventional weapons such as smart ammunition, laser equipment, and long range bombers.

■ All concerned parties should adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), accept verification systems to check and assess nuclear facilities and comply with the biological and chemical conventions.

■ The necessity to set a clear and concise standards that all parties agree on to determine the level of armament necessary to provide peace and stability in the region.

■ The necessity to define ballistic missiles and the number of the missiles locally produced or purchased from out side the region. This entails the middle range surface-to-surface, international, sea-land or land-sea and anti-ballistic missiles systems

### **The Syrian Position**

From the Syrian perspective, the comprehensive political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict should precede the regional security arrangements. This resulted in Syrian refusal to the multilateral negotiations committees; for, as long as no progress was made in the bilateral lanes these negotiations were aimless. In general, the Syrian position towards ACRS issues ,that don't include detailed frame work or set programs, but was limited to the general guidelines, agreeing with the Egyptian position.

## **The Jordanian Position**

From the Jordanian perspective, the regional countries should endorse all international agreements regarding unconventional weapons in order to develop a new Middle East free from all forms of mass destruction weapons. Meanwhile, the possession or production of nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles should be frozen. A regional commission to pursue such aims would be of paramount importance. Arms control negotiations should not be carried out in favor of one country over the other. There are two mechanisms through which the assessment of the military balance can be addressed: first by comparing numbers, and second by analyzing / comparing combat performance. Additionally, relevant rules and regulations should be set up to regulate the reduction of weaponry between regional parties.

Jordan, thus, calls to put all nuclear installations in the region under the supervision of the international agency. The people of the region will not feel safe unless these installations including Demona reactor " which is reported as an overage reactor and its radiation leakage in addition to its nuclear garble could be real threat" are under international agencies supervision.<sup>49</sup>

## **The Israeli Position**

From the Israeli perspective the elements required for arms control are clearly expressed in two areas. The first is the necessity to create a political environment that includes an over all diplomatic exchange, termination of belligerency, avoidance of cease fire violations, the atmosphere of confidence , compliance with the agreements, reconciliation and normalization between the people in the region and participation of all regional parties.

The second is related to negotiations for a new Middle East free from nuclear, biological and chemical warfare, which are to start not later than two years after achieving the political environment mentioned above. Moreover, negotiations should address the reduction of number of arms and their war machines. Endorsing such measures will be considered obligatory for all the countries in the region.

After pursuing the above mentioned perspectives, we can notice the similarity between the Jordanian and Egyptian visions. The two sides demand all countries in the region to endorse and abide by the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, along with chemical and biological treaties or conventions. Where Jordan demands a Middle East free from all forms of weapons of mass destruction, Egypt refers only to nuclear weapons. Furthermore, while Egypt required special verification systems, Jordan required the establishment of a regional commission to carry out such a verification. Also, the Egyptian perspective implies many ambiguous terms.

Hence, the question of the continual compliance of other parties refers to no definite timetable and simply means that such a compliance might run over the years without concrete control negotiations. This concept applies also on the normalization issue which may take years to settle.

## **THE EVALUATION OF ARMS CONTROL TRENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

By reviewing the international suggestions and initiatives for arms control measures in the Middle East we can notice the following :

- There are two types of initiatives, some are of an international nature that deal generally with arms control, and give some attention to the Middle East region, and the others are regional initiatives that focus on arms control in the Middle East in particular.

- The most realistic and suitable initiatives for disarmament of mass destruction weapons in the Middle East is that which stems from the region. particularly, the project of declaring the Middle East a mass destruction weapons free zone, for it deals with proliferation limitations in light of the principles of neutrality, equality, and comprehensiveness.

- Although the international initiatives " the off region initiatives" are of noble human nature outwardly, it is in reality unjust for all the parties. For example, the freezing of nuclear weapons and the necessity to distinguish between nuclear, chemical and biological weapons which been suggested in President Bush initiative will give Israel the right to keep its nuclear capability. while the Arabs should destroy the deterrent they own, which is considered a balance to the Israeli nuclear arsenal.

- The international initiatives are based upon the western understanding of balance that based on maintaining Israeli superiority as a factor of stability in the region. In addition to the western belief that the Israeli ownership of nuclear weapons will enhance the stability, while the ownership of the Arabs (WMD) will upset the stability of the region, because the Israeli leaders are more rational and able to self control than the Arabs, which is not acceptable.

- The international and regional assemblages concerned with restrictions and controls on the export of weapons and technology, as the Missile Technology Control System, were able to achieve very limited results in the Middle East. The reason is that it did not include all the missile technology exporting countries, furthermore, it didn't adopt a balance method in dealing with the states of the region. In the event that the role of these assemblages is activated, it would inflect negatively on the Arabian side rather than the Israelis because they own the required technological and scientific base for missiles production and they don't need any help in this regard.

There are sharp differences between the Israeli position and the Arabian ones. These differences are confined to two major differences:

- The first is related to the preference between political approach and security approach of the settlement. The Arabian perspectives confirm the necessity to have a strong linkage between the progress of bilateral and multilateral negotiations to be in balance. This linkage is based on the notion that it is impossible to have peace in the region without having the issues of security and arms control ( especially in the field of nuclear weapons arms control ) between the Arabs and Israel being settled. The Israeli side confirms the importance to postpone the arrangements of security and arms control to the aftermath of a comprehensive settlement of all issues between the two parties and also, after testing this settlement to hold in the future. The Israeli side wants this to slow the pace of security and arms control negotiations until the political settlements are finalized and agreed upon.

- The second problem, which is related to arranging the priorities in armament control agenda is that the Arab side insists on discussing all different issues, particularly, the Israeli nuclear arsenal. This position reflects the unwillingness to maintain this arsenal in the shadow of an aspired peace atmosphere, while the Israeli side attitude is limited on trust building between both sides.

The mechanism, that Israel suggests to free the Middle East from nuclear weapons requires establishing regional devices to investigate executing mutual registers and mutual inspections away from the concerned international agencies and organizations.

Regional states attitude concerning weapons of mass destruction treaties, are as follows:

- Jordan is a party in all these treaties. This has assured the clear Jordanian policy towards WMD and its truthfulness in its endeavors aiming at freeing the Middle East region from all WMD.

- As far as Syria and Egypt are concerned both of them are a party in nuclear non-proliferation treaty, but are not a party in biological and chemical weapons treaties and CTBT. think they will never sign it unless Israel initiates to sign or join nuclear non-proliferation treaty(NPT), since both Syria and Egypt are considering the biological and chemical agents as deterrence weapon in face of Israeli nuclear weapons.

- Israel is not a party in most of these treaties, and at the same time, it insists on not joining a nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Israel will not let the International Atomic Energy Agency inspect its nuclear plants and other WMD and has asked the Arabian side to accelerate the acceptance of the biological and chemical weapons embargo. This attitude indicates that

Israel is still insisting on keeping its WMD, and so this attitude is considered a main challenge to the proposal of Middle East Free Zone of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the quantitative and qualitative growth of different types of arms in the Middle East, it would be overly optimistic and probably wrong to assume that the arms race and competition will end soon. It is also wrong to assume that these trends are irreversible.

There have been many regional and international initiatives to control the armament race in this region. Over the past four decades, in the Middle East, there have been a number of failed arms control initiatives and proposals. Such failures are due to several logical reasons, the most important of which is the lack of will to politically address the Arab-Israeli conflict. When the conflicting parties became involved in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, two approaches crystallized. The first was comprehensive arms control, including all international initiatives for arms control in the Middle East. The most important of which was President Bush's 1991, Paris Declaration 91 of the five Permanent Security Council members along with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Biological Warfare Convention (CWC) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) 96. The second is regional armament control as an integral part in the multilateral negotiations. All efforts in this regard today have been mere theories. .

The recent history of war and the accumulation of suspicions between the different parties in the Middle East led to the assumption that improving the regional political environment was a prerequisite for successful and productive regional arms control measures. Any long-term solution to the conflict in the Middle East must ultimately involve the cooperation of the nations in the region.

There should be an attempt to take advantage of arms control possibilities in the Post-Cold War and Post-Gulf War environment. Initially, modest steps can and should be taken to help curb the arms competition in the Middle East. Increased transparency of arsenals and arms transfer is a good first step. The world's major suppliers involved in multilateral talks must go beyond well-meaning rhetoric and the steps to increase transparency about arms transfers. They should take the initiative first among themselves and then among so-called second-tier suppliers.<sup>50</sup>

The United States, as a leading country of the five powers, should control the flow of arms and related technologies to the Middle East. They should take the lead in developing any type of organization for the purpose of developing, monitoring, and enforcing an agreed-upon list of

technologies whose transfer to the Middle East would be strictly monitored. They should give far higher priority to supporting and furthering international efforts to curb the proliferation of unconventional weapons. They should also call for the procurement and testing of ballistic missiles as they should push to curtail their proliferation through a ban on the sale of missiles or their component technologies by all suppliers to Middle Eastern countries. Further, the U.S. must give the completion of a chemical weapons convention much higher priority than it has received thus far.

The world's major arms suppliers need to help develop a series of confidence and security building measures that would be relevant and acceptable to the countries in the Middle East. Confidence building measures in the ME should include some procedures such as hot line agreements, the establishment of an international center for the prevention of conflict, and the expanded use of cooperative aerial inspections.<sup>51</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Arms control is essential in the Middle East, which is now, at least from the United States point of view, among the most likely sites of future international hostilities. Many of the countries in the region look at peace and arms control agreements as means to produce potential economic benefits by reducing military spending. Minimum progress is expected, unless joint efforts are noticed on the international level, as well as on the national and regional levels

Despite the complexity of the Middle Eastern issues, trust, confidence building measures, and arms control are different factors that can help lead the region toward a durable peace. Arms control is affected by any progress on the peace track. Simultaneously, it affects the peace process. Therefore, this issue should be seriously taken into consideration. Arms race and competition will not end soon, but, it is wrong to assume that nothing can be done.

President Bush's initiative was a step towards arms control in the Middle East, but it was not able to resist for two reasons. The first is the economic interests of the major suppliers of arms to the Middle East including the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China, and the second is the initiative failed to address the security concerns of the states in the region.

Since 1990, the Arabs have proposed the creation of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The achievement of this goal faced many obstacles, probably the most difficult aspect was the change in the Israeli's security posture.

Word Count = 7,260

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ariel Levite," Prospects for Middle East Arms Control in the Aftermath of the Gulf War", in Arms Control and the New Environment, ed. Shahi Feldmean and Ariel Levite (Jafee Center for Strategic Studies, 1994),111-115.
- <sup>2</sup> Alan Platt"Arms control in the Middle East ",The Arab Israeli search for peace,ed.Steven Spiegel,University of California Institute,pp.140-142.
- <sup>3</sup> The bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Israel and the Arabs stated after President Bush's initiative in March, 1991, and his proposal for arms control in the region on May, 29. See The Arab-Israeli Peace Process Briefing Book, ( Washington, DC:The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1991), Doc.2.1 and Doc.9.22.
- <sup>4</sup> Ahmad Fakher," Innovative Proposals for Arms Control in the Middle East" in Practical Peace Making in the Middle East,(Dar Alsharq Press, 1992), 87.
- <sup>5</sup> Michael Nacht, Jay Winik and Alan Platt, The Middle East:" What About Arms\_Control?", Washington Post, ( September 22, 1991), C3.
- <sup>6</sup> These reasons include military, political, cultural and historical reasons, whether between Arabs and Israel or Iraq and Iran.
- <sup>7</sup> The conventional arms include advanced fighter aircrafts, armored combat vehicles, artillery, helicopters, and tanks. The unconventional arms as ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, biological weapons and nuclear weapons in some countries.
- <sup>8</sup> Saudi Arabia has been the premier arms purchaser in the world, Iraq was the second, Iran was the third, Syria was the eighth and Egypt was the tenth. For more see SIPRI, Yearbook 1990: World Armament and Disarmament, ( New York, Oxford University Press, 1990 ), 228.
- <sup>9</sup> Murad Ibrahim Al-Dasouqi, "Military Power in Arab Regional Confrontation", The International Politics Journal,(January2000).
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Dr Muhammed Qadri Sa'eed, "Decision-Taking and Armament: Israel", The International Politics Journal, (January 2000), 22-24.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Sami Hajjar, Security Implications of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, December 17, 1998, 6-9.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>17</sup> Robert G. Neumann, "Conventional Arms Exports and Stability in the Middle East, Journal of International Affairs, (Summer 1995), 189.
- <sup>18</sup> Richard Grimmett, Trends in Conventional Arms Transfers to the Third World by Major Suppliers, (Congressional Research Service, 1991), 578.
- <sup>19</sup> Frank G Wisner, "Middle East Arms Sales". The DISAM Journal, (Spring 1995), 102.
- <sup>20</sup> William D. Hartung, "US Conventional Arms Transfer: Promoting Stability or Fueling Conflict?" Arms Control Today, (vol. 25, no.9, November 1995) 15-23 and 52-62.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Dr Abdulmoniem Said and Ahmad Ibrahim, "Conventional Arms Control in the Middle East", The International Politics Journal, Issue 135, (December 1993), 4.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Andrew Pierre, "President Bush's Middle East Arms Control Initiative: One Year Later", Arms Control Today, (June 1992), 15.
- <sup>25</sup> Robert Pear, "US Sales of Arms to the World Decline by 22% Last Year", The New York Times, (July 21, 1992), A14.
- <sup>26</sup> Jackson Diehl, "Strategic Plans Giving Way to Middle East Arms Flow", The Washington Post, (4 October 1992), A24.
- <sup>27</sup> Edward B. Atkeson, A Military Assessment of the Middle East 1991-96, (Carlisle Barracks, PA, US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, December 7, 1992), 10.
- <sup>28</sup> Roland Evans and Robert Novak, "Nuclear Warheads for Iran?" The Washington Post (October 12, 1992).
- <sup>29</sup> Bill Gertz, "Chinese Build Reactor for Iranian Program", The Washington Times, (October 16, 1992), 3.
- <sup>30</sup> W. Seth Carus and Janne E. Nolan, "Arms Control and the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles", in Arms Control and Confidence Building in the Middle East, ed. Alan Platt, (United States Institute of Peace, 1992), 65.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid, 66, 129.
- <sup>32</sup> Martin Navias, Adelphi Papers 252 Ballistic Missile Proliferation in the Third World, (Brassy's for the IIS, summer 1990) 29-31.
- <sup>33</sup> Senator John McCain, "A US Congressional View on Arms Control", in Arms Control in the Middle East, ed. Dore Gold, (The Jerusalem Post and Westview Press, 1990), 49.

<sup>34</sup> Laura Drake, "Arms Control and the Peace Process", in Integrated MiddleEast Regional Approaches to Unconventional Arms Control and Disarmament., (The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research), 1999, 40-46.

<sup>35</sup> Arms Control in the Middle East", The International Politics Journal, Issue 115( April 1992),178.

<sup>36</sup> Rosemary Hollis, "Security in the Gulf: No Panaceas", Military Technology, (October 1991), 521.

<sup>37</sup> Presidential Document, White House Fact Sheet on the Middle East Arms Control Initiative, (May 29, 1991), vol.27, No.22, 688-689.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> These countries are China, France, Russia, Britain, and USA, which are responsible for 78% of arms exports to the Middle East between 1985-1989.

<sup>45</sup> White House Fact Sheet on The Middle East Arms Control Initiative, 68.

<sup>46</sup> US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency," Statement of the Five Countries-Paris, July 9, 1991," World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1990, 23.

<sup>47</sup> Bruce Jentleson, The Middle East Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) Talks: Progress, Problems, and Prospects, ( Institute on Global Conflict / University of California, September 1996), 4.

<sup>48</sup> The International Politics Journal, Issue 115, Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Such as Brazil, India, Argentina, Italy and South Africa.

<sup>51</sup> Platt, Ibid.,144-148.



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